

# ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S

## mystery magazine

### CONTENTS

#### NOVELETTE

SUMMER SESSION ONLY *by Ed Dumont* : ..... 133

#### SHORT STORIES

MEDICINE WOMAN <i>by Richard Deming</i> : .....	2
EVERYBODY EXCEPT WILBUR <i>by Jack Ritchie</i> : .....	15
FRESH THURINGER TODAY <i>by Leo R. Ellis</i> : .....	25
ECHO OF A SAVAGE <i>by Robert Edmond Alter</i> : .....	30
HERO OF THE SILVER SCREEN <i>by Jay Folb</i> : .....	41
THE CLEAN PLATTER <i>by Frank Sisk</i> : .....	48
A DEBT TO DOC <i>by Carl Henry Rathjen</i> : .....	66
LEGACY OF OFFICE <i>by Rog Phillips</i> : .....	72
UNTIL DEATH US DO PART <i>by Carroll Mayers</i> : .....	83
JUDGMENT DAY <i>by Thomasina Weber</i> : .....	89
FINAL PERFORMANCE <i>by Dick Ellis</i> : .....	102
THE DANGEROUS AGE <i>by Richard Hardwick</i> : .....	110
SHOW ME FIRST YOUR PENNY <i>by Jan MacKenzie</i> : .....	120
KILL THE TASTE <i>by Steve O'Connell</i> : .....	128

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*Despite the wise ministrations of mothers and wives, the solicitous alchemy of the home remedy may occasionally yield "the medicine that is worse than the malady."*

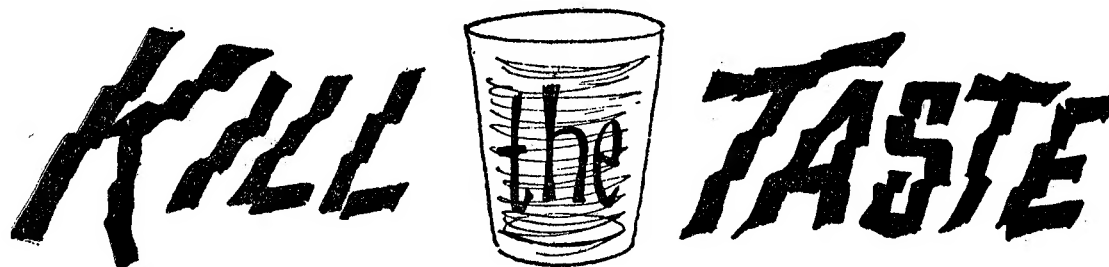
NORA MERRICK measured three teaspoons of the dark brown fluid into the glass of water and stirred. Her cool green eyes examined the result and then she added one spoonful of concentrated lemon juice.

She carried the glass into the

"I'm quite positive of it." Really, Nora thought, men are just like babies. They're suspicious of every pill or medicine. Jerome had been like that. And Bill.

Harold lifted the glass. "What's in it?"

"Some lemon juice."



bedroom, stirring it as she went.

Her husband lay propped up by two pillows. "What's that?"

"Your medicine, Harold."

He put aside his magazine. "The doctor didn't prescribe any medicine. He said that all I needed was rest and quiet for a couple of days."

She put the glass on the table beside him. "This won't do you any harm."

He regarded the glass dubiously. "Maybe it won't do me any harm, but how do you know it will do me any good?"

"Besides that."

"Just medicine."

He frowned. "One of your home remedies?"

Nora began tidying the nightstand. "Dear, could you please remember to use the ashtray? That's what it's there for."

He studied her. "You look a little flushed. I'll bet you've got the flu too."

She put the back of one hand to her forehead. Yes, it did seem a little warm.

He smiled slightly. "Here. Drink my glass. You need it more than I

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By  
Steve O'Connell

do. It will do you a lot of good."

"No," she said coldly. "I'll make some for myself later."

Harold stared at his glass and then put it back on the night table. "I'll drink this in a little while."

Nora felt the impulse to speak sharply, but she controlled herself. "All right. But I'll be back in fifteen minutes and that glass better

be empty. Gone to the last drop."

She went into the kitchen to do the dishes.

Detective Sergeant Paley rummaged through the top drawer of his desk until he found a pack of cigarettes. "What did you say the address was?"

Sergeant Blanchard fidgetted impatiently. "714 East Atkins."

Paley tapped out a cigarette and lit it. "You're with the St. Louis

Police Department, eh, Sergeant?"

Blanchard nodded. "I traced them to Cincinnati and then here. Naturally I'll need your permission and cooperation before I can make the arrest."

Paley settled back in his chair and glanced idly out of the window. "Looks like it's going to rain today."

Blanchard cleared his throat. "Don't you think we'd better get going?"

Paley leisurely exhaled smoke. "Can't leave until I see the captain."

Blanchard's eyes went significantly to the door behind Paley. "Isn't that his office?"

Paley grinned. "Relax. Take it easy. The captain won't be back for another ten minutes. Did you expect us to get to 714 East Atkins just in time to knock a glass from somebody's hand?" He indicated the notebook on his desk. "According to the information you gave me, they've been married only five weeks. Barely enough time to get settled and take out the insurance. I don't think anything's going to happen for a while."

Nora put away the last dish and re-entered the bedroom. The glass on the night table had not been emptied.

Harold turned a page of his mag-

azine. "Anything in the mail this morning?"

"Just some advertising. And a letter from the insurance people."

"What do they want?"

"Nothing. They're just notifying us that our policies have gone through and they're welcoming us to the fold. Practically a form letter."

Harold smiled. "Well, now I'm worth twenty thousand dead."

"Don't say that," Nora said automatically.

Harold put his hands behind his head. "Twenty thousand. Now that ought to give you a feeling of security."

Yes, Nora thought, security. When you got right down to it, money was practically the only security you could count on. Jerome had left her fifteen thousand and Bill seventeen. Her eyes went to the glass. "Your medicine. Do I have to stand here until you drink it?"

"All right," Harold said. "In just a minute."

She turned and went back into the kitchen. "You've got ten minutes to empty that glass. No more."

The pot of salted water on the stove was boiling now. She removed the dry spaghetti from the pack, regarded it thoughtfully, and then returned half of it to the cellophane container. Harold wouldn't

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be hungry, anyway, lying in bed.

She glanced toward the bedroom door. It was slightly ajar and she could see Harold. He was out of bed, his back toward her.

She watched as he took the glass to the begonias on the window sill. He poured the contents into the pot and returned to the bed. He grinned to himself as he picked up the magazine.

Nora's lips tightened. She got a clean glass, the brown bottle, and the lemon concentrate from the refrigerator.

Paley and Blanchard walked toward the car in the basement garage beneath the police station.

A mechanic straightened from under the opened hood. "Not quite through yet. Another ten minutes. Want to take another car?"

"No," Paley said. "I like the old buggy. We'll wait."

He and Blanchard went into the small office and closed the door against the shop noises. Paley sat down and leaned back in the swivel chair.

Blanchard's temper was frayed. "I don't see why we can't take another car."

Paley spoke mildly. "You'll get an ulcer for sure. Take the seconds and minutes as they come."

Blanchard glared at his watch and began pacing.

Twelve minutes later the mechanic opened the door. "All set now."

Inside the sedan Paley turned on the ignition and eased the car toward the exit. "How about a cup of coffee and a sandwich?"

"No," Blanchard snapped. "No."

Nora returned to the bedroom with the full glass.

Harold looked up. "More medicine?"

"Not *more*," Nora said angrily. "*The* medicine. I saw what you did with the other glass. You probably killed the plant."

Harold flushed guiltily. "If it kills a plant, I can't see what good it could possibly do me."

"Plants and people do not necessarily need the same thing," Nora said firmly. "Drink this."

Harold took the glass meekly.

The front doorbell sounded.

Nora didn't move. Her voice rose slightly. "Harold, drink your medicine. *Now*."

"I can't just gulp it down like some people," Harold complained. "I'd get sick. You might as well answer the door."

Nora hesitated and then took the glass from his hand. "I'm not going to have you pour this out too while I'm gone."

She returned in five minutes.

"Who was it?" Harold asked

"A salesman," Nora said. "I got rid of him."

Harold reluctantly took the glass from her outstretched hand. He tasted the liquid and made a face. "It's bitter."

Nora folded her arms and waited.

Harold resigned himself and slowly drank. He handed the empty glass back to her. "There. I hope now you're satisfied."

"Yes," Nora said. "I'm satisfied." She smiled. "Now try to get some rest."

At two-thirty Nora again answered the front door.

The two men on the front porch seemed to study her and then one of them said, "Mrs. Merrick?"

Nora nodded.

They showed their badges. "We'd like to talk to you, please."

Nora glanced uneasily back into the house and then opened the door a bit wider. "Please try to keep your voices down. My husband's asleep. He has a cold and didn't rest well last night."

Nora touched her forehead. Yes, she did have the flu. She stirred the glass of brown liquid and then drank it. Yes, a little bitter. Perhaps she should add some sugar the next time.

She looked out of the window at the rain.

First Jerome died of pneumonia and then Bill in that automobile accident. And now the police took Harold away with some ridiculous story about how he poisoned his wives.

She sighed. Really, I do have the most awful luck.



*Dear Fans:*

*Here are the particulars about the Alfred Hitchcock Fan Club:*

*Membership dues are fifty cents which covers mailing costs and handling. (Please send coins or money orders, no stamps.) For this you will receive an autographed photo of Mr. Hitchcock, his biography, and a bulletin of current news, which will be issued four times a year. You can't imagine how rewarding it is to hear from so many loyal readers, and active, and incoming Fan Club members. I want to thank all of you for your enthusiastic interest.*

*Most sincerely,  
Pat Hitchcock  
Tarzana, California*

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